THE

SCHOOL FOR LOVERS. (2)

A

COMEDY,

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Comedy is formed on a plan of Monsieur de FONTENELLE's, never intended for the stage, and printed in the eighth volume of his works, under the title of Le Testament.

The scene of that piece is laid in Greece, and the embarrassing circumstances depend on some peculiarities in the customs of that country. Slaves likewise, as is usual in the Grecian Comedy, act as confidants to the principal personages. The Author, therefore, hopes he may be excused for having made the story English, and his own; for having introduced a new character, and endeavoured to heighten those he found already sketched out. The delicacy of the sentiments in Philonoe and Eudamidas, he has inviolably adhered to, wherever he could insert them properly, in his Cælia and Sir John Dorilant; and would willingly flatter himself, that he has made great and not contemptible additions to their characters, as well as to the others.

Those who will give themselves the trouble to read both pieces, will see where the Author is, or is not, indebted to that elegant French Writer.

TO

THE MEMORY OF

MONSIEUR DE FONTENELLE,

THIS COMEDY IS INSCRIBED

BY A LOVER OF SIMPLICITY,

THE AUTHOR.

THE SCHOOL FOR LOVERS.

THIS Play may be considered as the model of the sentimental branch of the modern Comedy. The characters are all distinguished by elegance of sentiment, purity of expression, and propriety of manners.

Forcible, however, as a drama, it is not; the want of those necessary ingredients, Wit and Humour, will perhaps for ever confine it to the perusal of the closet.

Perhaps in few instances have the qualities of an author been reflected with greater truth upon his works than those of WHITEHEAD in the present play—it is distinguishable for calm, gentlemanly life, for unforced incidents, for situation no way forcible; recommended only by the decorum which sustains it.

Its original representation we did not witness; and the Stage of our own time would not easily bear its even elegant terseness of dialogue, without an infusion of Comic situation, and risible sallies of pleasantry. *The School for Lovers* is a production *sui generis*; another so exclusively serious, that professes to be a Comedy, we know not—yet it may be frequently read by the most fastidious; and never surely without considerable pleasure.—The memory of its author has been honourably cherished by MASON in a biography that deserves to live; not merely as a model of chaste composition, but of sincere and literary friendship, rarely met with among the *genus irritabile*.

PROLOGUE.

As it was intended to have been spoken.

SUCCESS makes people vain.—The maxim's true.—
We all confess it——and not over new.
The veriest clown who stumps along the streets,
And doffs his hat to each grave cit he meets,
Some twelvemonths hence, bedaub'd with livery lace,
Shall thrust his saucy flambeau in your face.

Not so our Bard—tho' twice your kind applause
Has, on this fickle spot, espous'd his cause:
He owns, with gratitude, th' obliging debt;
Has twice been favour'd, and is modest yet.
Plain Tragedy, his first adventurous care,
Spoke to your hearts, and found an echo there.
Plain Comedy to-night, with strokes refin'd,
Would catch the coyest features of the mind:
Would play politely with your hopes and fears;
And sometimes smiles provoke, and sometimes tears.

Your giant wits, like those of old, may climb
Olympus high, and step o'er space and time;
May stride with seven-leagu'd boots, from shore to shore,
And, nobly by transgressing, charm you more:
Alas! our Author dares not laugh at schools—
Plain sense confines his humbler Muse to rules.

Form'd on the classic scale his structures rise;
He shifts no scenes to dazzle and surprise.
In one poor garden's solitary grove,
Like the primæval pair, his lovers rove:
And in due time will each transaction pass;
—Unless some hasty critic shakes the glass.

PROLOGUE.

As it was spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

SUCCESS makes people vain—The maxim's true.—
We all confess it—and not over new.
The veriest clown, who stumps along the streets,
And doffs his hat to each grave cit he meets;
Some twelvemonths hence, bedaub'd with livery lace
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Not so our Bard—though twice your kind applause
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Olympus high, and step o'er space and time;
May stride, with seven-leagu'd boots, from shore to shore,
And, nobly by transgressing, charm ye more:
Alas! our Author dares not laugh at schools—
Plain sense confines his humbler Muse to rules:
He shifts no scenes—But here I stop'd him short—
Not change your scenes! said I—I'm sorry for't:
My constant friends above, around, below,
Have English tastes, and love both change and shew:

Without such aid, even Shakspere would be flat—
Our crouded pantomimes are proofs of that.
What eager transport stares from every eye,
When pullies rattle, and our Genii fly!
When tin cascades like falling waters gleam;
Or through the canvas—bursts the real stream:
While thirsty Islington laments in vain,
Half her New River roll'd to Drury-Lane.

Lord, sir, said I, for gallery, boxes, pit;
I'll back my Harlequin against your wit—
Yet still the Author, anxious for his play,
Shook his wise head—What will the critics say?
As usual, sir, abuse you all they can—
And what the ladies?—He's a charming man!
A charming piece!—One scarce knows what it means:—
But that's no matter——where there's such sweet scenes!
*Still he persists:—and let him:—*entre nous*—*
I know your tastes; and will indulge 'em too.
Change you shall have; so set your hearts at ease:—
Write as he will; we'll act it as you please.

Dramatis Personæ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

SIR JOHN DORILANT, *a Man of nice Honour, Guardian to* Cælia, - - - - - - - - Mr. Garrick.

MODELY, } *Men of the Town,* - - - { Mr. Palmer.
BELMOUR, } { Mr. O'brien.

An old Steward to Sir John Dorilant, - - - Mr. Castle.

Footman to Sir John Dorilant. - - - - - Mr. Fox.

Women.

LADY BEVERLEY, *a Widow Lady, Mother to* Cælia, - - - - - - - - - - Mrs. Clive.

CÆLIA, *Daughter to Lady* Beverley, *and Ward to* Sir John, - - - - - - - - - Mrs. Cibber.

ARAMINTA, *Sister to* Sir John Dorilant, - - Mrs. Yates.

SCENE, *a Garden belonging to Sir John Dorilant's House in the Country, with an Arbour, Garden-chairs, &c.*

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THE SCHOOL FOR LOVERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Garden. Enter ARAMINTA *with an affected Carelessness, and Knotting.*—MODELY *following.*

Modely.

BUT madam!

Ara. But sir! what can possibly have alarmed you thus? You see me quite unconcerned. I only tell you in a plain, simple, narrative manner——(this plaguy thread)——and merely by way of conversation, that you are in love with Cælia; and where is the mighty harm in all this?

Mod. The harm in it, madam!—have I not told you a thousand and a thousand times, that you were the only woman who could possibly make me happy?

Ara. Why, aye, to be sure you have, and sworn a thousand and a thousand oaths to confirm that assertion.

Mod. And am not I here now expressly to marry you?

Ara. Why that too is true——but——you are in love with Cælia.

Mod. Bless me, madam, what can I say to you? If it had not been for my attendance upon you, I had never known Cælia or her mother either—though they are both my relations. The mother has since indeed put some kind of confidence in me—she is a widow, you know———

Ara. And wants consolation! The poor orphan too, her daughter!—Well, charity is an excellent virtue. I never considered it in that light before.—You are vastly charitable, Mr. Modely.

Mod. It is impossible to talk with you.——If you will not do me justice, do it to yourself at least. Is there any comparison betwixt you and Cælia? Could any man of sense hesitate a moment? She has yet no character. One does not know what she is, or what she will be; a chit—a green girl of fourteen or fifteen.

Ara. Seventeen at least.———(I cannot undo this knot.)———

Mod. Well, let her be seventeen. Would any man of judgment attach himself to a girl of that age? O'my soul, if one was to make love to her, she would hardly understand what one meant.

Ara. Girls are not quite so ignorant as you may imagine, Mr. Modely; [illegible] will understand you, take my word for it; [illegible]derstand you. As

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to your men of judgment and sense, here is my brother now;—I take him to be full as reasonable as yourself, and somewhat older; and yet, with all his philosophy, he has brought himself to a determination at last, to fulfil the father's will, and marry this green girl. I am sorry to tell you so, Mr. Modely, but he will certainly marry her.

Mod. Let him marry her. I should perhaps do it myself, if I was in his place. He was an intimate friend of her father's. She is a great fortune, and was given to him by will. But do you imagine, my dear Araminta, that if he was left to his own choice, without any bias, he would not rather have a woman nearer his own years? He might almost be her father.

Ara. That is true. But you will find it difficult to persuade me, that youth in a woman is so insurmountable an objection. I fancy, Mr. Modely, it may be got over. Suppose I leave you to think of it.—(I cannot get this right.)— [*Going.*

Mod. Stay, dear Araminta, why will you plague me thus? Your own charms, my earnestness, might prove to you—

Ara. I tell you I don't want proofs.

Mod. Well, well, you shall have none then. But give me leave to hope, since you have done me the honour to be a little uneasy on my account—

Ara. Uneasy!—I uneasy! What does the man mean?—I was a little concerned indeed to give you uneasiness by informing you of my brother's intend-

ed marriage with Cælia. But—(this shuttle bends so abominably.)

Mod. Thou perplexing tyrant! Nay, you shall not go.—May I continue to adore you? you must not forbid me that.

Ara. For my part, I neither command nor forbid any thing. Only this I would have you remember, I have quick eyes. Your servant.—(I wish this knotting had never come in fashion.) [*Exit* Ara.

Mod. Quick eyes indeed! I thought my cunning here had been a master-piece. The girl cannot have told sure! and the mother is entirely on my side. They certainly were those inquisitive eyes she speaks of, which have found out this secret.—Well, I must be more cautious for the future, and act the lover to Araminta ten times stronger than ever.—One would not give her up till one was sure of succeeding in the other place.

Enter BELMOUR *from behind, with a book in his hand.*

Bel. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, Modely!

Mod. [*Starting.*] Belmour!—how the deuce came you here?

Bel. How came I here!—How came you here, if you come to that? A man can't retire from the noise and bustle of the world, to admire the beauties of the spring, and read pastoral in an arbour, but impertinent lovers must disturb his meditations.—Thou art the errantest hypocrite, Modely—

[*Throwing away the book.*

Mod. Hypocrite!—My dear friend, we men of gallantry must be so.—But have a care, we may have other listeners for aught I know, who may not be so proper for confidants. [*Looking about.*

Bel. You may be easy on that head. We have the garden to ourselves. The widow and her daughter are just gone in, and Sir John is busy with his steward.

Mod. The widow, and her daughter! Why, were they in the garden?

Bel. They just came into it; but upon seeing you and Araminta together, they turned back again.

Mod. On seeing me and Araminta! I hope I have no jealousies there too. However, I am glad Cælia knows I am in the garden, because it may probably induce her to fall in my way—by chance you know, and give me an opportunity of talking to her.

Bel. Do you think she likes you?

Mod. She does not know what she does.

Bel. Do you like her?

Mod. Why, faith, I think I do.

Bel. Why then do you pursue your affair with Araminta; and not find some honourable means of breaking off with her?

Mod. That might not be quite so expedient. I think Araminta the finest woman, and Cælia the prettiest girl I know. Now they are both good fortunes, and one of them I am resolved to have, but which——

Bel. Your great wisdom has not yet determined. Thou art undoubtedly the vainest fellow living.—

I thought you brought me down here now to your wedding?

Mod. 'Egad I thought so too; but this plaguy little rustic has disconcerted all my schemes. Sir John, you know, by her father's will, may marry her if he pleases, and she forfeits her estate if she marries any one else.—Now I am contriving to bring it about, that I may get her, and her fortune too.

Bel. A very likely business, truly. So you modestly expect that Sir John Dorilant should give up his mistress, and then throw her fortune into the bargain, as an additional reward to the obliging man who has seduced her from him.

Mod. Hum! why, I don't expect quite that. But you know, Belmour, he is a man of honour, and would not force her inclinations, tho' he loved her to distraction.——Come, come, he is quite a different creature from what you and I are.

Bel. Speak for yourself, good sir; yet why should you imagine that her inclinations are not as likely to fix upon him as you? He has a good person, and is scarce older than yourself.

Mod. That shews your ignorance; I am ten years younger than he is. My dress, and the company I keep, give a youth and vivacity to me, which he must always want. An't I a man of the town? O that town, Belmour! Could I but have met these ladies there, I had done the business.

Bel. Were they never there?

Mod. Never.—Sir Harry Beverley, the father of

this girl, lived always in the country, and divided his time between his books and his hounds. His wife and daughter seldom mixed with people of their own rank, but at a horse-race, or a rural visit. And see the effects! The girl, though she is naturally genteel, has an air of simplicity.

Bel. But does not want sense.

Mod. No, no!—She has a devilish deal of that kind of sense, which is acquired by early reading. I have heard her talk occasionally, like a queen in a tragedy; or at least like a sentimental lady in a comedy, much above your misses of thirty in town, I assure you.——As to the mother——but she is a character, and explains herself.

Bel. Yes, yes, I have read her. But pray how came it to pass, that the father, who was of a different way of thinking in regard to party, should have left Sir John guardian to his daughter, with the additional clause too, of her being obliged to marry him?

Mod. Why, that is somewhat surprising. But the truth of the case was, they were thoroughly acquainted, and each considered party as the foible of the other. Sir Harry thought a good husband his daughter's best security for happiness; and he knew it was impossible Sir John Dorilant should prove a bad one.

Bel. And yet this prospect of happiness would you destroy.

Mod. No, no; I only see farther than Sir Harry did, and would encrease that happiness, by giving her a better husband.

Bel. O! your humble servant, sir.

Mod. Besides, the mother is entirely in my interest, and by the bye has a hankering after Sir John herself. "He is a sober man, and should have a "woman of discretion for his wife; not a hoyden-"ing girl."——'Egad, Belmour, suppose you attacked the widow? The woman is young enough, and has an excellent jointure.

Bel. And so become your father-in-law.

Mod. You will have an admirable opportunity to-night: we are to have the fiddles, you know, and you may dance with her.

When music softens, and when dancing fires!

Eh! Belmour!

Bel. You are vastly kind to Sir John, and would ease him I find of both his mistresses. But suppose this man of honour should be fool enough to resign his mistress, may not another kind of honour oblige him to run you through the body for deserting his sister?

Mod. Why, faith, it may. However it is not the first duel I have fought on such an occasion, so I am his man. Not that it is impossible but he may have scruples there too.

Bel. You don't think him a coward?

Mod. I know he is not. But your reasoning men

have strange distinctions. They are quite different creatures, as I told you, from you and me.

Bel. You are pleased to compliment. But suppose now, as irrational as you think me, I should find out a means to make this whole affair easy to you?

Mod. How do you mean?

Bel. Not by attacking the widow, but by making my addresses in good earnest to Araminta.

Mod. I forbid that absolutely.

Bel. What, do you think it possible I should succeed after the accomplished Mr. Modely?

Mod. Why, faith, between you and me, I think not; but I don't choose to hazard it.

Bel. Then you love her still?

Mod. I confess it.

Bel. And it is nothing upon earth but that insatiable vanity of yours, with a little tincture of avarice, that leads you a gadding thus?

Mod. I plead guilty. But, be it as it will, I am determined to pursue my point. And see where the little rogue comes most opportunely. I told you she would be here. Go, go, Belmour—you must not listen to all my love-scenes. [*Exit* Bel.] Now for a serious face, a little upon the tragic; young girls are mighty fond of despairing lovers.

Enter CÆLIA.

Cælia. [*With an affected surprise.*] Mr. Modely!——are you here?——I am come to meet my mamma—I did not think to meet you here.

Mod. Are you sorry to find me here, madam?

Cælia. Why should I be sorry, Mr. Modely?

Mod. May I hope you are pleased with it?

Cælia. I have no dislike to company.

Mod. But is all company alike? Surely one would choose one's companions. Would it have been the same thing to you, if you had met Sir John Dorilant here?

Cælia. I should be very ungrateful if I did not like Sir John Dorilant's company. I am sure I have all the obligations in the world to him, and so had my poor papa. [*Sighing.*

Mod. Whatever were your papa's obligations, his gratitude I am sure was unbounded.——O that I had been his friend!

Cælia. Why should you wish that, Mr. Modely?—You would have had a great loss in him.

Mod. I believe I should. But I might likewise have had a consolation for that loss, which would have contained in it all earthly happiness.

Cælia. I don't understand you.

Mod. He might have left his Cælia to me.

Cælia. Dear, how you talk!

Mod. Talk, madam!——O I could talk for ever, would you but listen to my heart's soft language, nor cruelly affect to disbelieve when I declare I love you.

Cælia. Love *me*, Mr. Modely?——Are you not in love with Araminta?

Mod. I once thought I was.

Cælia. And do lovers ever change?

Mod. Not those who feel a real passion. But there are false alarms in love, which the unpractised heart sometimes mistakes for true ones.

Cælia. And were yours such for Araminta?

Mod. Alas! I feel they were. [*Looking earnestly at her.*

Cælia. You don't intend to marry her then, I hope?

Mod. Do you hope I should not marry her?

Cælia. To be sure I do. I would not have the poor lady deceived, and I would willingly have a better opinion of Mr. Modely than to believe him capable of making false protestations.

Mod. To you he never could.

Cælia. To me?—I am out of the question.——But I am sorry for Araminta, for I believe she loves you.

Mod. If you can pity those who love in vain, why am not I an object of compassion?

Cælia. Dear Mr. Modely, why will you talk thus? My hand, you know is destined to Sir John Dorilant, and my duty there does not even permit me to think of other lovers.

Mod. Happy, happy man! Yet give me leave to ask one question, madam.——I dread to do it, though my last glimpse of happiness depends upon your answer.

Cælia. What question?—Nay, pray speak, I intreat it of you.

Mod. Then tell me, lovely Cælia, sincerely tell me, were your choice left free, and did it depend upon you

only to determine who should be the master of your affections, might I expect one favourable thought?

Cælia. [*After some hesitation.*] It—it does not depend upon me.

Mod. I know it does not, but if it did?

Cælia. Come, come, Mr. Modely, I cannot talk upon this subject. Impossibilities are impossibilities. —But I hope you will acquaint Araminta instantly with this change in your inclinations.

Mod. I would do it, but dare not.

Cælia. You should break it first to Sir John.

Mod. My difficulty does not lie in the breaking it; but if I confess my passion at an end, I must no longer expect admittance into this family, and I could still wish to talk to Cælia as a friend.

Cælia. Indeed, Mr. Modely, I should be loth myself to lose your acquaintance; but—O here comes my mamma, she may put you in a method.

Enter Lady BEVERLEY.

L. Bev. In any method, my dear, which decency and reserve will permit. Your servant, cousin Modely. What, your are talking strangely to this girl now?—O you men!

Mod. Your ladyship knows the sincerity of my passion here.

Cælia. [*With surprise.*] Knows your sincerity?

L. Bev. Well, well, what signifies what I know?—You were mentioning some method I was to put you in.

Cælia. Mr. Modely, madam, has been confessing to me that he no longer loves Araminta.

L. Bev. Hum!—why, such things may happen, child. We are not all able to govern our affections. But I hope if he breaks off with her, he will do it with decency.

Mod. That, madam, is the difficulty.

L. Bev. What!——Is it a difficulty to be decent? Fie, fie, Mr. Modely.

Mod. Far be it from me even to think so, madam, before a person of your ladyship's reserved behaviour. But considering how far I have gone in the affair——

L. Bel. Well, well, if that be all, I may perhaps help you out, and break it to Sir John myself—Not that I approve of roving affections, I assure you.

Mod. You bind me ever to you.—But there is another cause which you alone can promote, and on which my eternal happiness———

L. Bev. Leave us—leave us, cousin Modely. I must not hear you talk in this extravagant manner.—[*Pushing him towards the scene, and then aside to him.*] I shall bring it about better in your absence. Go, go, man, go. [*Exit* Mod.] A pretty kind of fellow really.——Now, Cælia; come nearer child; I have something of importance to say to you.—What do you think of that gentleman?

Cælia. Of Mr. Modely, madam?

L. Bev. Ay, Mr. Modely, my cousin Modely.

Cælia. Think of him, madam?

L. Bev. Ay, think of him, child; you are old enough to think sure, after the education I have given you. Well, what answer do you make?

Cælia. I really don't understand your ladyship's question.

L. Bev. Not understand me, child? Why, I ask you how you like Mr. Modely? What you should think of him as a husband?

Cælia. Mr. Modely as a husband! Why surely, madam, Sir John———

L. Bev. Fiddlefaddle Sir John; Sir John knows better things than to plague himself with a wife in leading-strings.

Cælia. Is your ladyship sure of that?

L. Bev. O ho! would you be glad to have me sure of it?

Cælia. I don't know what I should be glad of. I would not give Sir John a moment's pain to be mistress of the whole world.

L. Bev. But if it should be brought about without giving him pain. Hey! Cælia——

[*Patting her cheek with her fan.*

Cælia. I should be sorry for it.

L. Bev. Heyday!

Cælia. For then he must think lightly of me.

L. Bev. What does the girl mean? Come, come, I must enter roundly into this affair. Here, here, sit down, and tell me plainly and honestly, without equivocation or reservation, is Modely indifferent to you? Nay, nay,—look me in the face; turn your eyes towards me. One judges greatly by the eyes, especially in women. Your poor papa used to say that my eyes reasoned better than my tongue.——Well, and now tell me without blushing, is Modely indifferent to you?

Cælia. I fear he is not, madam, and it is that which perplexes me.

L. Bev. How do you feel when you meet him?

Cælia. Fluttered.

L. Bev. Hum! while you are with him?

Cælia. Fluttered.

L. Bel. Hum! When you leave him?

Cælia. Fluttered still.

L. Bev. Strong symptoms truly!

Cælia. When Sir John Dorilant talks to me, my heart is softened, but not perplexed. My esteem, my gratitude overflows towards him. I consider him as a kind father, with all the tenderness without the authority.

L. Bev. But when Mr. Modely talks?

Cælia. My tranquillity of mind is gone, I am pleased with hearing what I doubt is flattery, and when he grasps my hand——

L. Bev. Well, well, I know all that.—Be decent, child.——You need say no more, Mr. Modely is the man. [*Rising.*

Cælia. But, dear madam, there are a thousand obstacles.——I am afraid Sir John loves me; I am sure he esteems me, and I would not forfeit his esteem for the universe. I am certain I can make him an affectionate and an humble wife, and I think I can forget Mr. Modely.

L. Bev. Forget a fiddle! Don't talk to me of forgetting. I order you on your duty not to forget. Mr. Modely is, and shall be the man. You may trust

my prudence for bringing it about. I will talk with Sir John instantly. I know what you are going to say, but I will not hear a word of it. Can you imagine, Cælia, that I shall do any thing but with the utmost decency and decorum?

Cælia. I know you will not, madam; but there are delicacies——

L. Bev. With which I am unacquainted to be sure, and my daughter must instruct me in them. Pray, Cælia, where did you learn this nicety of sentiments? Who was it that inspired them?

Cælia. But the maxims of the world——

L. Bev. Are altered, I suppose, since I was of your age. Poor thing, what world hast thou seen? Notwithstanding your delicacies and your maxims, Sir John perhaps may be wiser than you imagine, and choose a wife of somewhat more experience.

Cælia. May he be happy wherever he chooses—— But, dear madam——

L. Bev, Again? don't make me angry. I will positively not be instructed. Ay, you may well blush. ——Nay, no tears.—Come, come, Cælia, I forgive you. I had idle delicacies myself once. Lard! I remember when your poor papa—he, he, he—but we have no time for old stories. What would you say now if Sir John himself should propose it, and persuade the match; and yet continue as much your friend as ever, nay become more so, a nearer friend?

Cælia. In such a case, madam——

L. Bev. I understand you, and will about it in-

stantly. B'ye Cælia; O how its little heart flutters! [*Exit L.* Bev.

Cælia. It does indeed. A nearer friend? I hardly know whether I should wish her success or not—— Sir John is so affectionate. Would I had never seen Mr. Modely!——Araminta too! what will she say? ——O I see a thousand bad consequences. I must follow her, and prevent them. [*Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Scene continues. Enter Lady BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

Lady Beverley.

PR'YTHEE don't tease me so; I vow, cousin Modely, you are almost as peremptory as my daughter. She truly was teaching me decorum just now, and plaguing me with her delicacies, and her stuff. I tell you, Sir John will be in the garden immediately: this is always his hour of walking; and when he comes, I shall lay the whole affair before him, with all its concatenation of circumstances, and I warrant you bring it about.

Mod. I have no doubt, madam, of the transcendency of your ladyship's rhetoric; it is on that I entirely rely. But I must beg leave to hint, that Araminta already suspects my passion, and should it be openly declared, would undoubtedly prevail that instant with her brother to forbid me the house.

L. Bev. Why, that might be.

Mod. And though I told your daughter I did not care how soon it came to an eclaircissement; yet a woman of your ladyship's penetration and knowledge of the world, must see the necessity of concealing it, at least for a time. I beg pardon for offering what may have even the distant appearance of instruction. But it is Sir John's delicacy which must be principally alarmed with apprehensions of her disregard for him; and I am sure your ladyship's manner of doing it, will shew him where he might much better place his affections, and with an undoubted prospect of happiness.

L. Bev. Ay, now you talk to the purpose.——But stay, is not that Sir John coming this way?——It is I vow, and Araminta with him. We'll turn down this walk, and reason the affair a little more, and then I will come round the garden upon him.

[Modely *takes her hand to lead her out.*

You are very gallant, cousin Modely. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir JOHN DORILANT *and* ARAMINTA.

Ara. What do you drag me into the garden for? We were private enough where we were—and I hate walking.

Sir J. Dor. Forgive me, my dear sister; I am restless every where; my head and heart are full of nothing but this lovely girl.

Ara. My dear, dear brother, you are enough to spoil any woman in the universe. I tell you again and again, the girl is a good girl, an excellent girl, and

will make an admirable wife. You may trust one woman in her commendations of another; we are not apt to be too favourable in our judgments, especially when there is beauty in the case.

Sir J. Dor. You charm me when you talk thus. If she is really all this, how happy must the man be who can engage her affections! But, alas! Araminta, in every thing which regards me, it is duty, not love, which actuates her behaviour. She steals away my very soul by her attentions, but never once expresses that heart-felt tenderness, those sympathetic feelings——

Ara. Ha, ha, ha!——O my stars!——Sympathetic feelings!——Why, would you have a girl of her age have those sympathetic feelings, as you call them! If she had, take my word for it, she would coquet it with half the fellows in town before she had been married a twelvemonth. Besides, Sir John, you don't consider that you was her father's friend; she has been accustomed from her infancy to respect you in that light: and our fathers' friends, you know, are always old people, grey beards, philosophers, enemies to youth, and the destruction of gaiety.

Sir J. Dor. But I was never such.

Ara. You may imagine so; but you always had a grave turn. I hated you once myself.

Sir J. Dor. Dear Araminta!

Ara. I did, as I hope to live; for many a time has your aversion to dancing hindered me from having a fiddle.——By the bye, remember we are to have the fiddles to-night.——But let that pass. As the case

now stands, if I was not already so near akin to you, you have the temper in the world which I should choose in a husband.

Sir J. Dor. That is obliging, however.

Ara. Not so very obliging, perhaps, neither. It would be merely for my own sake; for then would I have the appearance of the most obedient, sympathetic wife in the universe, and yet be as despotic in my government as an eastern monarch. And when I grew tired, as I probably should do, of a want of contradiction, why, I should find an easy remedy for that too—I could break your heart in about a month.

Sir J. Dor. Don't trifle with me; 'tis your serious advice I want; give it me honestly as a friend, and tenderly as a sister.

Ara. Why, I have done it fifty times. What can I say more? If you will have it again, you must. This then it is in plain terms.—But you are sure you are heartily in love with her?

Sir J. Dor. Pshaw!

Ara. Well then, that we will take for granted; and now you want to know what is right and proper for you to do in the case. Why, was I in your place, I should make but short work with it. She knows the circumstances of her father's will; therefore would I go immediately to her, tell her how my heart stood inclined, and hope she had no objections to comply, with what it is not in her power to refuse.

Sir J. Dor. You would not have me talk thus abruptly to her?

Ara. Indeed I would. It will save a world of trouble. She will blush perhaps at first, and look a little awkward (and, by the bye, so will you too); but if she is the girl I take her for, after a little irresolute gesture, and about five minutes conversation, she will drop you a curtesy with the demure humility of a vestal, and tell you it shall be as you and her mamma pleases.

Sir J. Dor. O, that it were come to that!

Ara. And pray what hinders it? Nothing upon earth but your consummate prudence and discretion.

Sir J. Dor. I cannot think of marrying her, till I am sure she loves me.

Ara. Lud, lud!——Why, what does that signify? If she consents, is not that enough?

Sir J. Dor. Her gratitude may induce her to consent, rather than make me unhappy.

Ara. You would absolutely make a woman mad.

Sir J. Dor. Why, could you think of marrying a man who has no regard for you?

Ara. The case is widely different, my good casuistical brother; and perhaps I could not—unless I was very much in love with him.

Sir J. Dor. And could you then?

Ara. Yes, I could—to tell you the truth, I believe I shall.

Sir J. Dor. What do you mean?

Ara. I shall not tell you.——You have business enough of your own upon your hands.

Sir J. Dor. Have you any doubts of Modely?

Ara. I shall keep them to myself, if I have. For you are a wretched counsellor in a love-case.

Sir J. Dor. But dear Araminta——

Ara. But dear Sir John Dorilant, you may make yourself perfectly easy, for you shall positively know nothing of my affairs. As to your own, if you do not instantly resolve to speak to Celia, I will go and talk to her myself.

Sir J. Dor. Stay, Lady Beverley is coming towards us.

Ara. And has left my swain yonder by himself.

Sir J. Dor. Suppose I break it to her?

Ara. It is not a method which I should advise; but do as you please.—I know that horrid woman's sentiments very exactly, and I shall be glad to have her teased a little. [*Aside*]——I'll give you an opportunity by leaving you; and so adieu, my dear sentimental brother!

Enter Lady BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

We'll change partners, if you please, madam.—[*To Lady* Beverley *as she enters. And then exit with* Modely.]

L. Bev. Poor mistaken creature! how fond the thing is!——[*Aside, and looking after* Araminta.]——Your servant, Sir John.

Sir J. Dor. Your ladyship's most obedient.——[*After some irresolute gesture on both sides——Lady* Beverley *speaks.*]

L. Bev. I——I——have wanted an opportunity of speaking to you, Sir John, a great while.

Sir J. Dor. And I, madam, have long had an affair of consequence to propose to your ladyship.

L. Bev. An affair of consequence to me!—O lud! ——will you please to speak, sir.

Sir J. Dor. Not till I have heard your ladyship's commands.

L. Bev. What, must women speak first? Fie, Sir John——[*Looking languishingly.*]——Well then, the matter, in short, is this: I have long been thinking how to dispose of my girl properly. She is grown a woman, you see, and, though I who am her mother say it, has her allurements.

Sir J. Dor. Uncommon ones indeed.

L. Bev. Now I would willingly consult with you how to get her well married, before she is tainted with the indecorums of the world.

Sir J. Dor. It was the very subject which I proposed to speak to you upon.—I am sorry to put your ladyship in mind of a near and dear loss——But you remember Sir Harry's will.

L. Bev. Yes, yes, I remember it very well. Poor man! it was undoubtedly the only weak thing he was ever guilty of.

Sir J. Dor. Madam!

L. Bev. I say, Sir John, we must pardon the failings of our deceased friends. Indeed his affection for his child excuses it.

Sir J. Dor. Excuses it!

L. Bev. Yes indeed does it. His fondness for her might naturally make him wish to place her with a

person of your known excellence of character; for my own part, had I died, I should have wished it myself.—— I don't believe you have your equal in the world.——Nay, dear Sir John, 'tis no compliment. —This, I say, might make him not attend to the impropriety of the thing, and the reluctance a gentleman of your good sense and judgment must undoubtedly have to accede to so unsuitable a treaty; especially as he could not but know there were women of discretion in the world, who would be proud of an alliance where the prospect of felicity was so inviting and unquestionable.

Sir J. Dor. [*Who had appeared uneasy all the time she was speaking.*] What women, madam? I know of none.

L. Bev. Sir John!——That is not quite so complaisant, methinks—to our sex, I mean.

Sir J. Dor. I beg your pardon, madam; I hardly know what I say. Your ladyship has disconcerted every thing I was going to propose to you.

L. Bev. Bless me, Sir John!—I disconcerted every thing? How, pray? I have been only talking to you in an open friendly manner, with regard to my daughter; our daughter indeed I might call her, for you have been a father to her. The girl herself always speaks of you as such.

Sir J. Dor. Speaks of me as a father?

L. Bev. Why, more unlikely things have happened, Sir John.

Sir J. Dor. Than what, madam?

L. Bev. Dear Sir John!——You put such peremptory questions; you might easily understand what one meant methinks.

Sir J. Dor. I find, madam, I must speak plain at once.——Know then, my heart, my soul, my every thought of happiness is fixed upon that lovely girl.

L. Bev. O, astonishing! Well, miracles are not ceased, that's certain. But every body, they say, must do a foolish thing once in their lives.——And can you really and sincerely think of putting Sir Harry's will in execution?

Sir J. Dor. Would I could!

L. Bev. To be sure the girl has a fine fortune.

Sir J. Dor. Fortune! I despise it. I would give it with all my soul to any one who could engage me her affections.——Fortune! dirt.

L. Bev. I am thunderstruck!

Sir J. Dor. [*Turning eagerly to her.*] O, madam, tell me, sincerely tell me, what method can I possibly pursue to make her think favourably of me! You know her inmost soul, you know the tender moments of address, the easy avenues to her unpractised heart. Be kind, and point them out.

[*Grasping her hand.*

L. Bev. I vow, Sir John, I don't know what to say to you.——Let go my hand.——You talked of my disconcerting you just now; I am sure you disconcert me with a witness.——[*Aside.*] I did not think the man had so much rapture in him. He squeezed my hand with such an emphasis!—I may gain him perhaps at last.

Sir J. Dor. Why will you not speak, madam? Can you see me on the brink of desperation, and not lend a friendly hand to my assistance?

L. Bev. I have it.—[*Aside.*]——Alas, Sir John, what signifies what I can do! Can I answer for the inclinations of a giddy girl?

Sir J. Dor. You know she is not such; her innocent mind is yet untainted with the follies of her sex. And if a life devoted to her service, without a wish but what regards her happiness, can win her to be mine——

L. Bev. Why, that might go a great way with an unprejudiced mind. But when a first passion has taken place—

Sir J. Dor. [*With amazement.*] What do you mean?

L. Bev. To tell you the truth, I am afraid the girl is not so untainted as you imagine.

Sir J. Dor. You distract me.——How——when ——whom can she have seen?

L. Bev. Undoubtedly there is a man—

Sir J. Dor. Tell me who, that I may——no, that I may give her to him, and make her happy, whatever becomes of me.

L. Bev. That is generous indeed.—So—so. [*Aside.*

Sir J. Dor. But 'tis impossible. I have observed all her motions, all her attentions, with a lover's eye incapable of erring.——Yet stay——has any body written to her?

L. Bev. There are no occasion for letters, when people are in the same house together.

Sir J. Dor. Confusion!

L. Bev. I was going to offer some proposals to you, but your strange declaration stopped me short.

Sir J. Dor. You proposals?——You?——Are you her abetter in the affair? O madam, what unpardonable crime have I committed against you, that you should thus conspire my ruin? Have not I always behaved to you like a friend, a brother?—I will not call you ungrateful.

L. Bev. Mercy on us!—The man raves.—How could it possibly enter into my head, or the girl's either, that you had any serious thoughts of marrying her? But I see you are too much discomposed at present, to admit of calm reasoning. So I shall take some other opportunity.——Friend—brother—ungrateful!—Very fine truly!—I hope, at least, you will not think of forcing the poor girl's inclinations! Ungrateful indeed! [*Exit in a passion.*

Sir J. Dor. Not for the universe—Stay, madam.——She is gone.——But it is no matter. I am but little disposed for altercation now. Heigh ho!——Good Heaven! can so slight an intersourse have effected all this?—I have scarce ever seen them together. O that I had been born with Belmour's happy talents of address!—Address!——'tis absolute magic, 'tis fascination—Alas! 'tis the rapidity of real passion.——Why did Modely bring him hither to his wedding? Every thing has conspired against me. He brought him; and the delay of the lawyers has kept him here. Had I taken Araminta's advice a poor

fortnight ago, it had not been in the power of fate to have undone me.—And yet she might have seen him afterwards, which would at least have made her duty uneasy to her.—Heigh ho!

Enter ARAMINTA *and* MODELY.

Ara. [*Entering.*] I tell you, I heard them very loud! and I will see what is the matter. O! here is my brother alone.

Sir J. Dor. [*Taking her tenderly by the hand.*] O Araminta!—I am lost beyond redemption.

Ara. Dear brother, what can have happened to you?

Sir J. Dor. [*Turning to* Modely.] Mr. Modely, you could not intend it, but you have ruined me.

Mod. [*Alarmed.*] I, Sir John!

Sir J. Dor. You have brought a friend with you, who has pierced me to the very soul.

Mod. Belmour!

Sir J. Dor. He has stolen my Cælia's affections from me.

Ara. [*Looking slyly at* Modely.] Belmour!

Mod. This must be a mistake, but I'll humour it. [*Aside.*] It cannot be—who can have told you so?

Sir J. Dor. Her mother has been this instant with me to make proposals on the subject.

Mod. For Belmour!

Sir J. Dor. She did not absolutely mention his name, but I could not mistake it. For she told me the favoured lover was under the same roof with us.

Mod. [*A little disconcerted.*] I could not have believed it of him.

Ara. Nor do I yet. [*Looking slyly again at* Modely.

Mod. There must certainly be some mistake in it; at the worst, I am sure I can prevail so far with Belmour, as to make him drop his pretensions.

Sir J. Dor. You cannot make her cease to love him. [*Sighing.*]

Mod. Time may easily get the better of so young a passion.

Sir J. Dor. Never, never; she is too sincere, too delicately sensible.

Mod. Come, come, you must not think so; it is not yet gone so far, but that it may be totally forgotten.—Now for a master-stroke to clench the whole.—[*Aside.*] In the mean time, Sir John, I have the satisfaction of acquainting you, that my affair, with Araminta's leave, draws very near a conclusion. The lawyers have finished their papers, and I only now wait for your perusal of them.

Ara. [*Aside.*] Well said!

Mod. I ordered the writings to be laid upon your table.

Ara. [*Aside.*] What does he mean?

Sir J. Dor. Dear Mr. Modely, you shall not wait a moment for me. I will dispatch them instantly. I feel the want of happiness too severely myself, to postpone it in others. I leave you with my sister; when she names the day, you may depend upon my concurrence. [*Exit Sir* J. Dor.

[Mod. *and* Ara. *look at one another for some time, then he speaks.*] I hope, madam, you are now convinced of my sincerity.

Ara. I am absolutely struck dumb with your assurance.

Mod. [*With an affected surprise.*] Madam!

Ara. You cannot mean all this.

Mod. Why not, madam?

Ara. Why, don't you know that I know——

Mod. I cannot help a lady's knowledge or imaginations. All I know is, that it is in your power to make me either the happiest or most miserable man in the whole creation.

Ara. Well, this is astonishing.

Mod. I am sorry, madam, that any unguarded behaviour of mine, any little playful gallantries, should have occasioned surmises, which——

Ara. Serious, as I hope to live.

Mod. Is it not enough to make one serious, when the woman one has pursued for years, almost with adoration, is induced by mere appearances to doubt the honourableness of one's intentions? Have you not heard me this moment apply to your brother, even in the midst of his uneasiness?——I little expected where the difficulty would lie.

Ara. Well, well, poor thing, I won't tease it any longer; here, there, take my hand.

Mod. Duped, by Jupiter.—[*Aside.*] O my everlasting treasure! And when, and when shall I be happy?

Ara. It shall depend upon yourself.

Mod. To-morrow, then, my angel, be the day. O Araminta, I cannot speak my transport!——And did you really think I was in love with Cælia?

Ara. Why, as a proof of my future sincerity, I must confess I did.

Mod. I wonder how you could!

Ara. Come, come, there were grounds enough for a woman in love to go upon.

Mod. [*Taking her by the hand.*] But you are now perfectly easy?

Ara. [*Pulling her hand from him.*] Why, yes, I think I am.——But what can my brother mean about Belmour?

Mod. It is some trick of the widow's.

Ara. I dare say she meant you.

Mod. Possibly she might—you know her motives.

Ara. Yes, yes, her passion for my brother is pretty notorious. But the wretch will be mistaken.——To-morrow, you say?

Mod. To-morrow, my adorable.

Ara. It shall be as you please.——But my situation is so terribly awkward, that I must break from you. Adieu! [*Exit* Ara.

Mod. Upon my soul she is a fine woman, and loves me to distraction; and what is still more, I most undoubtedly love her.——I have a good mind to take her.——Yet not to have it in my power to succeed in the other place, would call my parts in question.

——No, no;—I must not disparage my parts neither. ——In order to be a great character, one should go as near being a rogue as possible. I have a philosopher's opinion on my side in that, and the practice of half the heroes and politicians in Europe. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Scene continues. *Enter* BELMOUR.

Belmour.

CÆLIA in love with me! 'Egad the thing is not impossible; my friend Modely may have been a little mistaken. Sir John was very serious when he told me of it; and though I protested to him that I had never made the least advances, he still persisted in his opinion.—The girl must have told him so herself. ——Let me recollect a little. She is always extremely civil to me—but that indeed she is to every body.—I do not remember any thing particular in her looks; but I shall watch them more narrowly the next time I see her.——She is very handsome; and yet in my opinion, notwithstanding Modely's infidelity, Araminta is much the finer woman.—Suppose—No, that will not do.

Enter MODELY.

Mod. So, so, Mr. Belmour, I imagined I should find you here; this is the lover's corner. We have all had our reveries in it. But why don't you talk

louder, man? You ought, at least, to give me my revenge in that.—My soliloquies, you know, are easily over-heard.

Bel. I never designedly over-heard them, Mr. Modely; nor did I make any improper use of the accident.

Mod. Grave, very grave, and perfectly moral! And so this is all I am to have for the loss of my mistress.—Heigh ho!

Then I must be content to see her bless
Yon happier youth.———

Bel. Your raillery is a little unseasonable, Mr. Modely; for to speak plainly, I begin to suspect that this is some trick of yours, to dupe me as well as Sir John Dorilant.

Mod. Upon my honour, no, if we must be serious: it may be a mistake; but not intended on my side, I can assure you. Come, come, if the girl really likes you, take her. If I should prove the happy man, give me joy, and there's an end of it.

Bel. I fancy you are used to disappointments in love, they sit so easy upon you.—Or rather I should suppose, in this case, you are pretty sure of your ground.

Mod. Neither, upon my soul; but a certain *Je ne sai quoi—Gaieté de Coeur*, which carries me above misfortunes; some people call it vanity.

Bel. And are not absolutely mistaken. But what becomes of Araminta all this while?

Mod. [*Yawning.*] I shall marry her, I believe, to-morrow.

Bel. Marry her?

Mod. Yes; Sir John is at this very moment looking over the settlements.

Bel. I don't understand you.

Mod. And yet it is pretty plain, methinks. I tell you I am to be married to-morrow.—Was it not time to make sure of one mistress, when you were running away with the other?

Bel. You know I have no such intentions.—But are you really serious? Have you laid aside your designs upon Cælia?

Mod. Not so, neither.

Bel. What do you mean then by your marriage with Araminta? Why won't you unriddle this affair to me?

Mod. Because it is at present a riddle to myself, and I expect Lady Beverley every moment to resolve the enigma.

Bel. Was it a scheme of her's?

Mod. Certainly, and I partly guess it, but will not unbosom till I know it fully.—Come, come, with all that gravity of countenance and curiosity, you must leave me instantly; the lady will be here, and the plot unravelled, and then———

Bel. I shall expect to be satisfied. [*Exit.*

Mod. Ha! ha! ha! or else you will fight me, I suppose. Why, so you may; and so may Sir John Dorilant too, and faith with some colour of reason.

But my comfort is, that I have experience on my side; and if I survive the rencounter, I shall be a greater hero than ever amongst the ladies, and be esteemed in all companies as much a man of honour as the best of you.

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

L. Bev. Dear Cousin Modely, I am all over in an agitation; we shall certainly be discovered—that devil Araminta——

Mod. What of her, madam?

L. Bev. Is now with her brother talking so eagerly ——Oh! I saw her villanous changes in her countenance: I would have given the world to have overheard their conversation.—Come, come, you must advise me instantly.

Mod. Your ladyship must first let me into the secret. I am absolutely in a wood with regard to the whole affair.—What is all this of Cælia and Belmour?

L. Bev. Nothing, nothing at all; an errant dilemma of the foolish man's own making, which his impertinent sister will immediately clear up to him, and then all must come out.

Mod. But how came Belmour ever to be mentioned in the case?

L. Bev. Dear, dear, he never was mentioned. I must confess that I was so provoked with Sir John's unnatural behaviour, that I could not help telling him that Cælia had a lover, and in the house too.

Your situation with regard to Araminta made him never dream of you; and consequently all his suspicions turned on Belmour.

Mod. But you did not say that that lover had made his addresses to Cælia?

L. Bev. I don't know what I might have said; for he used me like a Turk. But whatever I said, I can unsay it again.

Mod. Why, if I might venture to advise a person of your ladyship's sagacity——

L. Bev. O ay, with all my heart, cousin Modely. For though I may say, without vanity, that nobody has a more clear apprehension of things when the mental faculty is totally undisturbed; yet, when I am in a trepidation, nobody upon earth can be more glad of advice.

Mod. Why, then, madam, to speak, with reverence, I should hope your ladyship would see the necessity of keeping me as concealed as possible. It is the young lady's passion, not mine, which must have the principal influence. Sir John Dorilant's peculiarity of temper is such——

L. Bev. Yes, yes, he has peculiarity enough, that's certain.

Mod. And it is there, madam, as the weakest part, that our attack will be the surest. If she confesses an inclination for me; not both the Indies, added to her fortune, could induce him to marry her.

L. Bev. That is honourable, however, cousin Modely. But he is a horrid creature, notwithstanding.

Mod. I grant it, madam; but a failure in an improper pursuit may recall his reason; and, as he does not want understanding, teach him to search for happiness where only it is to be expected.

L. Bev. He! he! I am so angry with him at present, that I really believe I should refuse him.

Mod. Your ladyship must not be too cruel.

L. Bev. Why, I confess it is not in my nature; but bless me! Here they come.——Let us run down this walk directly, for they must not see us together. [*Ex.*

Enter ARAMINTA *and* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

Ara. Come along, I say; you dragged me into the garden just now, and I will command in my turn. Talk to her you must, and shall. The girl has sense and spirit when she is disengaged from that horrid mother of her's; and I have told her you wanted her, and in this very spot.

Sir J. Dor. You cannot feel, Araminta, what you make me suffer.—But sooner or later it must come to this, and therefore I will assume a resolution, and be rid of all my doubts at once.

Ara. I tell you, this nonsense about Belmour is merely a phantom of her mother's raising, to sound your intentions, and promote her own.

Sir J. Dor. Thus far is certain, that Belmour disclaims all knowledge of the affair, and with an appearance of sincerity; but even that is doubtful. Besides, they are not his, but her inclinations which give me any concern. It is the heart I require. The

lifeless form, beauteous as it is, would only elude my grasp; the shadow of a joy, not the reality.

Ara. Dear, dear, that men had but a little common sense; or that one could venture to tell them what one knows of one's own sex! I have a good mind to be honest.——As I live, the girl is coming.—I'll speed her on the way. Courage, brother, Voila! [*Exit.*

Sir J. Dor. How shall I begin with her?——What idiots are men when they have a real passion! ridiculous, beneath contempt.——[*Walks about the stage.*]——Suppose——I will not suppose; the honest heart shall speak its faithful dictates, and if it fails,——why, let it.

Enter CÆLIA.

Cælia. [*With timidity.*] Araminta tells me, sir, that you have something to say to me.

Sir J. Dor. I have, madam.——Come forward, Miss Beverley.—Would you choose to sit?——[*They sit down.*]——*After some irresolute gesture.*] You are not afraid of catching cold?

Cælia. Not in the least, sir.

Sir J. Dor. I know sitting in the open air has that effect upon some people—but your youth and constitution——Did my sister say any thing concerning the subject I would speak to you upon?

Cælia. She only told me, sir, that it was of moment.

Sir J. Dor. It is of moment, indeed, Cælia.——But you must not think that I am angry.

Cælia. Angry, sir!

Sir J. Dor. I don't mean angry.——I am a little confused; but shall recover myself presently.——[*Rises, and* Cælia *rises too.*]——Nay, pray sit, Miss Beverley.——Whatever I feel myself, I would not disturb you.——*Returns to his seat, then, after a pause, goes on.*]——The affair I would speak to you upon is this:——You remember your father perfectly?

Cælia. And ever shall.

Sir J. Dor. Indeed he was a good man, Miss Beverley, a virtuous man, and felt tenderly for your happiness.——Those tears become you, and yet, methinks, I would not provoke them.——When he died, he left you to my care.

Cælia. Which alone made his loss supportable.

Sir J. Dor. Are you sincere in what you say?

Cælia. I should be ungrateful indeed, if I was not.

Sir J. Dor. [*Turning towards her.*] Nay, you are sincerity itself.—O Cælia; [*Taking her by the hand.*]—But I beg your pardon, I am assuming a liberty I have no right to take, till you allow it.

Cælia. Sir!

Sir J. Dor. I see I have alarmed you.—Retire, Miss Beverley,——I'll speak to you some other time. [*She is going.*]——Cælia, Miss Beverley,—pray come back, my dear.—I am afraid my behaviour is rather too abrupt.——Perhaps, too, it may displease you.

Cælia. I can be displeased with nothing from you, sir; and am ready to obey you, be your commands what they will.

Sir J. Dor. Commands, Cælia!——that's a hard word.

Cælia. I am sorry it offends you.

Sir J. Dor. You know best, Cælia, whether it ought to offend me—would I could read the sentiments of your heart! Mine are but too apparent.—In short, my dear, you know the purport of your father's will—dare you fulfil it?

Cælia. To the minutest circumstance.—It is my duty.

Sir J. Dor. Ah, Cælia, that word *duty* destroys the obligation.

Cælia. Sir!

Sir J. Dor. I don't know how it is, but I am afraid to ask you the only question, which, sincerely answered, could make me happy—or miserable.

[*Half aside.*

Cælia. Let me beg of you, sir, to ask it freely.

Sir J. Dor. Well then——is your heart your own?——O Cælia, that hesitation confirms my fears. You cannot answer in the affirmative; and have too much humanity for what I feel, to add to my torments.—Good God!—and is it possible, that an acquaintance of a few days should entirely obliterate the attentive assiduity, the tender anxieties which I have shewn for years!—But I understand it all too well. Mine were the awful, though heart-felt attentions of a parent:

his, the sprightly address of a presuming lover. His easy assurance has won upon your affections; and what I thought my greatest merit, has undone me.

Cælia. You were so good, sir, a little while ago, to pity my confusion; pity it now, and whilst I lay my heart open before you, be again that kind, that generous friend, which I have always found you.

Sir J. Dor. Go on.

Cælia. It is in vain for me to dissemble an ignorance of your meaning, nor would I if I could. I own I have been too much pleased with Mr. Modely's conversation.

Sir J. Dor. Modely's!

Cælia. Let me go on.——His intended marriage with Araminta, gave him a freedom in this family which it was not my business to restrain. His attentions to my mother, and the friendly manner in which he executed some commissions of consequence to her, gave him frequent opportunities of talking to me. I will confess too, that his appearance and his manner struck me. But I was so convinced of his real passion for Aramanta, that I never dreamt of the least attachment to me, till——

Sir J. Dor. Till what, when—Modely!—Why, he is to be married to my sister to-morrow or next day.

Cælia. I knew it was so intended, but his behaviour this morning, and the intercessions of my mother, had, I own, won upon me strangely; and induced me to believe that I only was the object of his pursuit.

Sir J. Dor. I am thunderstruck!——

Cælia. My mother made me clearly perceive that the completion of his marriage would be an injury to Araminta. She told me too, sir, that you yourself would be my adviser in the affair, and even persuade me to accept it.

Sir J. Dor. O the malicious woman!

Cælia. In that indeed I perceive she greatly erred. And I only mean this as a confession of what is past, and of what is now at an end for ever.——For the future, I give myself to your guidance alone, and am what you direct.—— [*Giving her hand to him.*

Sir J. Dor. Thou amiable softness?——No, Cælia, however miserable I may be myself, I will not make you so; it was your heart, not your hand, I aspired to. As the former has been seduced from me, it would be an injustice to us both to accept of the latter. As to Mr. Modely, and Lady Beverley, I have not deserved this treachery from them, and they shall both feel my resentment.

Cælia. Sir!

Sir J. Dor. She told me indeed there was a favoured lover; and my suspicions fell very naturally upon Belmour. Nay, even now, nothing but that lovely sincerity—which undoes me—could make me credit this villany of Modely.——O Cælia! what a heart have I lost!

Cælia. You cannot, shall not lose it; worthless as it is, 'tis yours, and only yours, my father, guardian, lover, husband! [*Hangs upon him weeping.*

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. Hey-day!—what a scene is here! What is the matter with ye both?

Sir J. Dor. O sister! that angel goodness, that mirror of her sex has ruined me.

Ara. Ruined you!—how?

Sir J. Dor. Nay, I am not the only sufferer: Modely is as false to you, as her mother is to all of us.

Ara. I don't understand you.

Sir J. Dor. You will too soon. My suspicions of Belmour were all a chimæra; it is your impious Modely who has possession of her heart.——To me she is lost irrecoverably.—— [*Going.*

Ara. Stay, brother.

Sir J. Dor. I cannot, my soul's too full. [*Exit.*

Ara. Pray, Miss Beverley, what is the meaning of all this?

Cælia. I cannot speak——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

Ara. I'll be hanged if this fellow Modely has not talked you into an opinion, that he is in love with you. Indeed, my dear, your youth and inexperience may lead you into strange scrapes; and that mother of yours is enough to turn any girl's head in the universe.—Come, come, unriddle this affair to me.

Cælia. Alas! madam, all I know is, that the only man I ever did, or ever can esteem, despises me, and, I fear, hates me.

Ara. Hates you! he doats upon you to distraction.

—But pray, did Modely ever make any serious addresses to you?

Cælia. Alas! but too often.

Ara. The hypocrite! but I'll be even with him.—And your mother, I suppose, encouraged him! An infamous woman! But I know her drift well enough——

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

L. Bev. Where is my poor girl? I met Sir John Dorilant in such a furious way, that he seems to have lost all common civility. What have they done to you, child?

Ara. Done to her? What has your ladyship done to her? I knew your little artifices long ago, but——

L. Bev. My artifices! Mrs. Araminta.

Ara. Your artifices, Lady Beverley; but they are all to no purpose; the girl has too good an understanding to be imposed on any longer; and your boasted machinations are as vain and empty in their effects, as in their contrivances.

L. Bev. What does the woman mean?—But the loss of a lover, I suppose, is an excuse for ill-breeding. Poor creature! if the petulency of thy temper would let me, I could almost pity thee. The loss of a lover is no agreeable thing; but women at our time of life, Mrs. Araminta, must not expect a lasting passion.

Ara. Scarce any at all I believe, if they go a wooing themselves. For my part, I have had the satis-

faction of being solicited however. And I am afraid my rustic brother never gave your ladyship's solicitations even the slightest encouragement. How was it? Did you find him quite hard hearted? No bowels of compassion for so accomplished a damsel?

Cælia. [*Interposing.*] Dear madam! dear Araminta!

L. Bev. Stand away, child——Desert, madam, is not always attended with success; nor confidence neither. There are some women so assured of their conquest, as even to disgust a lover on the very day of marriage.

Ara. Was my behaviour ever such?

L. Bev. I really cannot say Mrs. Araminta; but the world, you know, is censorious enough, when a match is broken off so near its conclusion, generally to charge the inconstancy of the lover to some defect of his mistress.

Ara. I defy him to produce any.

L. Bev. And yet he has certainly left you; *Never, never to return!*

Ara. Insolent!

Cælia. [*Interposing again.*] Dear Araminta!

Ara. But your ladyship may be mistaken even in that too. I may find him at his solicitations again? and if I do——

L. Bev. You'll take him.

Ara. Take him?——Daggers and poison sooner.

L. Bev. Poor creature!—Come, Cælia, words do but aggravate her misfortune. We only disturb her. You see, my dear, what are the effects of too violent

a passion. It may be a lesson for your future conduct.

Ara. Look you, Lady Beverley, don't provoke me.

L. Bev. Why, what will ye do?

Cælia. [*Interposing.*] For Heaven's sake, madam——

L. Bev. I fancy, Mrs. Araminta, instead of quarreling, we had better join forces.—If we could but get this girl out of the way, we might both succeed.

Ara. You are a wicked woman.——

L. Bev. Poor creature! shall I say any thing to my cousin Modely for you? You know I have weight with him.

Ara. Yes, madam; you may tell him that his connexions with you, have rendered him ridiculous; and that the revenge of an injured woman is never contemptible. [*Exit* Ara.

L. *Bev.* [*Leading off* Cælia *on the other side.*] Poor creature!——Come along, child.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Scene continues. Enter SIR JOHN DORILANT.

Sir J. Dorilant.

THIS fatal spot, which draws me to it almost involuntarily, must be the scene of another interview.—Thank Heaven I have recovered myself. Nor shall any misery which I may suffer, much less any prospect of a mean revenge, make me act unbecoming my character.

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. Well, brother, I hope you are resolved to marry this girl?

Sir J. Dor. Marry her, my dear Araminta! Can you think it possible, that I should have so preposterous a thought? No, my behaviour shall deserve; but not over-rule her inclinations. Were I to seize the tender opportunity of her present disposition, the world would ascribe it to her fortune; and I am sure my deceased and valuable friend, however kindly he meant to me in this affair, never intended that I should make his daughter unhappy.

Ara. But I tell you she loves you; and you must and shall marry her.

Sir J. Dor. Ah, sister, you are willing to dispose of her any way. That worthless lover of yours still hangs about your heart, and I have avoided seeing him on your account, as well as Cælia's.

Ara. To shew how mistaken you are in all this, I have given him up totally. I despise, and hate him; nay I am upon the brink of a resolution to give myself to another. [Sir John *shakes his head.*] I am, I assure you; his friend, Mr. Belmour, is by no means indifferent on the subject.

Sir J. Dor. And is this revenge on yourself, a proof of your want of passion for him?—Ah, Araminta!—Come, come, my dear, I own I think him unworthy of you, and would resent his usage to the utmost, did not I clearly perceive that it would ap-

pear mercenary in myself, and give real pain both to you and Cælia.

Ara. I actually don't know what to say to you.

Sir J. Dor. You had better say nothing. Your spirits at present are too much alarmed.—I have sent for Cælia hither; a short hour may determine the fates of all of us. I know my honourable intentions will give her great uneasiness. But it is my duty which exacts them from me.—You had better take a turn or two in some other part of the garden:—I see my steward coming this way;—I may want your assistance but too soon. [*Exit* Ara.

Enter the Steward.

Have you brought those papers I bade you look for?

Stew. Yes, sir. But there is the gentleman within to wait upon your honour, concerning the estate you intended to purchase. It seems a mighty good bargain.

Sir J. Dor. I cannot speak to him now.

Stew. Your honour always used to be punctual,

Sir J. Dor. Alas! Jonathan, I may be punctual again to-morrow.—Give me the papers. Did Miss Beverley say she would come to me?

Stew. Immediately, sir. But I wish your honour would consider, such bargains as these do not offer every day.

Sir J. Dor. Heigh ho!

Stew. It joins so conveniently too to your honour's own estate—within a hedge as I may say.

Sir J. Dor. Pr'ythee don't plague me.

Stew. Nay, 'tis not my interest, but your honour's. Though that indeed I may call my interest, for I am sure I love your honour.

Sir J. Dor. I know thou dost, Jonathan; and I am too hasty—but leave me now.——If the gentleman will do me the favour of staying all night, I may satisfy him in the morning. My head and heart are too full now for any business which concerns my fortune. [*Exit* Sir J. Dor.

Stew. Something goes very wrong with my poor master. Some love nonsense or other, I suppose. ——I wish all the women were in the bottom of the sea, for my part. [*Exit Stew.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY *and* CÆLIA.

L. Bev. I thought it requisite, Sir John, as I heard you had something of importance to transact with my daughter, to wait upon you with her.

Sir J. Dor. Was that necessary, madam?—I begged the favour of Miss Beverley's company only.

L. Bev. But a mother, you know, Sir John, who has a tender concern for her child——

Sir J. Dor. Should shew it on every occasion.

L. Bev. I find, Sir John, there is some misunderstanding at present, which a woman of prudence and experience might be much better consulted upon, than a poor young thing, whose——

Sir J. Dor. Not at all, madam; Cælia has all the prudence I require, and our present conversation will soon be over.

L. Bev. Nay, Sir John, to be sure I am not afraid of trusting my daughter alone with you. A man of your discretion will undoubtedly be guilty of no impropriety. But a third person sometimes, where the parties concerned are a little too much influenced by their passions, has occasioned very substantial, and very useful effects.—I have known several instances of it, in the course of my experience.

Sir J. Dor. This, madam, will not be one of them. —How teasing! [*Walking aside.*

L. Bev. I find, Sir John, that you are determined to have your own way, and therefore will shew you by my behaviour, that I know what good manners require; though I do not always meet with the same treatment from other people. [*Exit* L. Bev.

Sir J. Dor. Now, Cælia, we are alone, and I have many excuses to make to you for the impassioned sallies of our late conversation; which I do most sincerely—Can you pardon them?

Cælia. Alas! sir, 'tis I who ought to entreat for pardon.

Sir J. Dor. Not in the least, madam, I have no blame to cast upon you for any part of your conduct. Your youth and inexperience, joined to the goodness of your heart, are sufficient apologies for any shadow of indiscretion which might appear in your behaviour. I am afraid mine was not so irreproachable. However, Cælia, I shall endeavour to make you all the amends in my power; and to shew you that it is your happiness, not my own, which is the object of my anxiety.

Your father's will is but too clear in its intentions. But the purity of his heart never meant to promote my felicity at the expence of yours. You are therefore, madam, entirely at liberty from this moment, to make your choice where you please. This paper will entitle you to that authority; and this will enable you to bestow your fortune where you bestow your hand.——Take them, my dear.——Why are you so disturbed?——Alas! Cælia, I see too plainly the cause of these emotions. You only wish the happy man to whom you have given your heart, loved you as I do!———

But I beg pardon; and will only add one caution, which my duty demands of me, as your guardian, your protector, and your father's friend.—You have been a witness of Modely's transactions with my sister. Have a care therefore, Cælia; be sure of his firm attachment before you let your own hurry you into a compliance. These papers give you up all power on my part; but, as an adviser, I shall always be ready to be consulted.

Cælia. My tears and my confusion have hitherto hindered me from answering; not the invidious suggestion which you have so cruelly charged me with. What friend, what lover have I, to engross my attentions? I never had but one, and he has cast me off for ever.——O, sir, give me the papers, and let me return them where my soul longs to place them.

Sir J. Dor. No, Cælia, to accept them again would

impeach the justice of my whole proceeding. It would make it look like the mean artifice of a mercenary villain, who attempted to gain, by stratagem, what his merits did not intitle him to.——I blush to think of it.—I have performed my office. Be mistress of yourself, and let me fly from a combat to which I find myself unequal. [*Exit* Sir J. Dor.

[Cælia *sits down, leaning her head on her hand.*

Enter MODELY *and* BELMOUR.

Mod. Hist! hist! he has just left her, and in a fine situation for my approaches.——if you are not yet satisfied, I will make up all differences with you another time.——Get into the arbour, and be a witness of my triumph. You shall see me, like another Cæsar, Come, see—and overcome.

[Bel. *goes into the arbour.*

Mod. [*Comes forward, walks two or three turns by her, bowing as he passes, without being taken notice of, then speaks.*] If it is not an interruption, madam, when I find you thus alone.——

Cælia. [*Rising.*] I would choose to be alone.

Mod. Madam!

Cælia. [*After a little pause.*] In short, Mr. Modely, your behaviour to me of late is what I can by no means approve of. It is unbecoming your character as a man of honour; and would be a stain to the ingenuous modesty of my sex for me to suffer.

Mod. You surprise me, madam. Can the adoration of an humble love—the timid advance of a man

whom your beauty has undone, be such unpardonable offences?

[Cælia *looks with indignation at him, and is going off.*

Mod. [*Catching hold of her, and falling on his knees.*] Nay, madam, you must not leave me.

Cælia. Rise, sir, or I am gone this moment.——— I thought of flying from you, but my soul disdains it. ———Know then, sir, that I am mistress of myself, mistress of my fortune, and may bestow my hand wherever my heart directs it.

Mod. My angel!—— [*Coming eagerly up to her.*

Cælia. What do you mean?

Mod. That you may make the most sincere of lovers, the happiest of mankind. The addition of your fortune will add splendor to our felicity; and the frowns of disappointed love only heighten our enjoyments.

Cælia. Oh, thou vile one!——How does that cruel, generous man, who has rejected me, rise on the comparison!

Mod. Rejected you!——Sir John Dorilant!

Cælia. Yes, Mr. Modely, that triumph at least is yours. I have offered myself, and been refused. My hand and fortune equally disdained. But may perpetual happiness attend him, wherever his honest, honest heart shall fix!

Mod. O, madam, your inexperience deceives you. He knows the integrity of your mind, and trusts to that for recompence. His seeming disinterestedness it but the surer method of completing his utmost wishes.

Cælia. Blasphemer, stop thy tongue. The purity of his intentions is as much above thy malice, as thy imitation. [*She walks to one side of the stage, and* Modely *stands disconcerted on the other.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

L. Bev. Well, child, what has the man said to thee? Cousin Modely, your servant; you find our plot would not take, they were too quick upon us. ——Hey-day! what has been doing here?

Mod. O, madam, you are my only refuge; a wretch on the brink of despair flies to you for protection. That amiable creature is in full possession of herself and fortune, and yet rejects my tenderest solicitations.

L. Bev. Really!——What is all this? Tell me, Cælia, has the man actually given up all right and title to thee real and personal? Come, come, I must be a principal actress, I find, in this affair.—— Decency and decorum require it.—Tell me, child, is it so?

Cælia. Sir John Dorilant, madam, with a generosity peculiar to himself, (cruel generosity!) has cancelled every obligation which could confine my choice. These papers confirm the freedom he has given me——and rob me of all future comfort.

L. Bev. Indeed! I did not expect this of him; but I am heartily glad of it.—Give me the papers, child.

Cælia. No, madam:———Useless as they are, they are yet my own.

L. Bev. Useless!—What do you mean? Has the base man laid any other embargo on the child?

Cælia. I cannot bear, madam, even from you, to hear Sir John Dorilant treated with disrespect.—— Useless!—Yes, they shall be useless. Thus, thus I tear them into atoms; and disdain a liberty which but too justly reproaches my conduct.—Your advice, madam, has already made me miserable, but it shall not make me ungrateful or unjust. [*Exit* Cælia.

L. Bev. I am astonished! I never saw the girl in such a way before.—Why, this is errant disobedience, cousin Modely. I must after her, and know the bottom of it.—Don't dispair. [*Exit* L. Bev.

Bel. [*Coming out of the arbour.*] Come, see, overcome!—O poor Cæsar!

Mod. [*Humming a tune.*] You think I am disconcerted now?

Bel. Why really I should think something of that kind.

Mod. You never were more mistaken in your life. ——Egad, 'tis a spirited girl. She and Sir John Dorilant were certainly born for one another. I have a good mind to take compassion of them, and let them come together. They must and shall be man and wife, and I will e'en go back to Araminta.

Bel. Thou hast a most astonishing assurance.

Mod. Hush!——she is coming this way——get into your hole again, and be dumb.——Now you shall see a scene of triumph indeed.

Bel. Have a care Cæsar, you have the Britons to deal with. [*Retires.*

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. What, are they gone? and my wretch here by himself?—O that I could dissemble a little!—I will, if my heart bursts for it.——O, Mr. Modely, I am half ashamed to see you;——but my brother has signed those odious writings.

Mod. Then thus I seize my charmer.

Ara. Agreeable rascal!——Be quiet, can't you; you think one so forward now.

Mod. I cannot, will not be restrained, when the dear object of my wishes meets me with kind compliance in her eyes and voice!——To-morrow!——'Tis an age—why should we wait for that? To-night, my angel, to-night may make us one, and the fair prospect of our halcyon days even from this hour begin.

Ara. Who would not think this fellow, with his blank verse now, was in earnest? But I know him thoroughly.—Indeed, Mr. Modely, you are too pressing; marriage is a serious thing. Besides, you know, this idle bustle betwixt my brother and Cælia, which you seem to think me ignorant of, and which you, in some measure, though undesignedly I dare say, have occasioned, may obstruct us a little.

Mod. Not at all, my dear; an amusement *en passant*;—the mere raillery of gallantry on my side, to oblige her impertinent mother (who, you know, has a

penchant for Sir John herself) was the whole insignificant business.——Perhaps, indeed, I was something blameable in it.

Ara. Why, really, I think so, in your situation. But are you sure it went no further?—nothing else passed between you?

Mod. Nothing in nature.

Ara. Dear me, how mistaken people are! I cannot say that I believed it; but they told me, that you had actually proposed to marry her—that the girl was near consenting—and that the mother was your friend in the affair.

Mod. The mere malice and invention of Lady Beverley.

Ara. And there is not a word of truth in it then?

Mod. Not a syllable——You know my soul is yours.

Ara. O thou villain!—I thought to have kept my temper, and to have treated you with the contempt you deserve; but this insolence is intolerable.—Can you imagine that I am a stranger to your proceedings? a deaf, blind ideot?——O, I could tear this foolish heart, which, cheated by its passion, has encouraged such an insult.——How, how have I deserved this treatment? [*Bursting into tears.*

Mod. [*Greatly alarmed.*] By holy faith!—by every power above! you, and you only, are the passion of my soul!——May every curse——

Ara. Away, deceiver!—these tears are the tears of resentment.—My resolution melts not in my eyes.

'Tis fixed, unalterable!—You might imagine, from the gaiety of my temper, that it had its levity too: But know, sir, that a woman who has once been duped, defies all future machinations.

Mod. Hear me, madam!—nay, you shall hear me —

Ara. Shall!—insufferable insolence!——Go, sir; for any thing which regards me, you are free as air, free as your licentious principles. Nor shall a thought of what I once esteemed, disturb my future quiet. There are men who think me not contemptible, and under whose protection I may shelter my disgrace. —Unhand me.—This is the last time I shall probably ever see you; and I may tell you in parting, that you have used me cruelly, and that Cælia knows you as perfectly as I do. [*Exit* Ara.—Mod. *stands confounded.*

Enter Belmour.

Bel. Cæsar ashamed!—And well he may, 'faith.—Why, man, what is the matter with you? Quite dumb? quite confounded?—Did not I always tell you that you loved her?

Mod. I feel it sensibly.

Bel. And I can tell you another secret.

Mod. What's that?

Bel. That she loves you.

Mod. O that she did!

Bel. Did!—Every word, every motion of passion through her whole conversation betrayed it involuntarily. I wish it had been otherwise.

Mod. Why?

Bel. Because I had some thoughts of circumventing you. But I find it will be in vain.—Therefore, pursue her properly, and she is yours.

Mod. O never, Belmour, never!—I have sinned beyond a possibility of pardon. That she did love me, I have had a thousand proofs, which, like a brainless idiot, I wantonly trifled with.——What a pitiful rascal have I made myself?

Bel. Why, in that I agree with you;—but don't despair man; you may still be happier than you deserve.

Mod. With what face can I approach her? Every circumstance of her former affection, now rises in judgment against me. O, Belmour, she has taught me to blush!

Bel. And I assure you it becomes you mightily.

Mod. Where can I apply?—How can I address her?—All that I can possibly do, will only look like a mean artificial method of patching up my other disappointment.

Bel. More miracles still!—She has not only taught you to blush, but has absolutely made a man of honour of you!

Mod. Raillery is out of season.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Araminta, sir, desires to speak with you.

Mod. [*Eagerly.*] With me?

Serv. No, sir, with Mr. Belmour.

Bel. With me?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Bel. Where is she?

Serv. In the close walk by the house, sir.

Bel. And alone?

Serv. Entirely, sir.

Bel. I'll wait upon her this instant. [*Exit Servant.*

Mod. Belmour, you shall not stir.

Bel. By my faith but I will, sir.

Mod. She said there were men to whom she could fly for protection.—By my soul she intends to propose herself to you.

Bel. And if she does, I shall certainly accept her offer.

Mod. I'll cut your throat if you do.

Bel. And do you think to fright me by that? I fancy I can cut throats as well as other people. Your servant. If I cannot succeed for myself, I'll speak a good word for you. [*Exit* Bel.

Mod. What can this mean?—I am upon thorns till I know the event. I must watch them.—No, that is dishonest.—Dishonest! How virtuous does a real passion make one!—Heigh ho! [*Walks about in disorder.*] He seems in great haste to go to her. He has turned into the walk already.—That abominable old-fashioned cradle-work makes the hedges so thick, there is no seeing through them.——An open lawn has ten thousand times the beauty, and is kept at less expence by half.——These cursed unnatural chairs are always in the way too.—[*Stumbling against one of the garden chairs.*] What a miserable dog am I?——

I would give an arm to know what they are talking about.——We talk of female coquettes! By my soul we beat them at their own weapons!—Stay—one stratagem I may yet put in practice, and it is an honest one.——The thought was lucky.——I will about it instantly. Poor Modely! How has thy vanity reduced thee!

ACT V. SCENE I.

Scene continues. Enter ARAMINTA *and* BELMOUR.

Araminta.

You find, Mr. Belmour, that I have seen your partialities, and like a woman of honour I have confessed my own. Your behaviour to your friend is generous beyond comparison, and I could almost join in the little stratagem you propose, merely to see if he deserves it.

Bel. Indeed, madam, you mistake him utterly. Vanity is his ruling vice; an idle affectation of success among the ladies, which makes fools admire, and boys envy him, is the master-passion of his giddy heart. The severe checks he has met with to-day, have sufficiently opened his understanding; and the real possession of one valuable woman, whom he dreads to lose, will soon convince him how despicable his folly has made him.

Ara. I am afraid, Mr. Belmour, a man who has

half his life been pursuing bubbles, without perceiving their insignificance, will be easily tempted to resume the chace. The possession of one reality will hardly convince him that the rest were shadows. And a woman must be an idiot indeed, who thinks of fixing a man to herself after marriage, whom she could not secure before it. To begin with insensibility!—O fie, Mr. Modely.

Bel. You need not fear it, madam; his heart——

Ara. Is as idle as our conversation on the subject. I beg your pardon for the comparison; as I do, for having sent for you in this manner. But I thought it necessary that both you and Mr. Modely should know my real sentiments, undisguised by passion.

Bel. And may I hope you will concur in my proposal?

Ara. I don't know what to say to it; it is a piece of mummery which I am ill suited for at present. But if an opportunity should offer, I must confess I have enough of the woman in me, not to be insensible to the charms of an innocent revenge.—But this other intricate business, if you can assist me in that, you will oblige me beyond measure. They are two hearts, Mr. Belmour, worthy to be united! Had my brother a little less honour, and she a little less sensibility—But I know not what to think of it.

Bel. In that, madam, I can certainly assist you.

Ara. How, dear Mr. Belmour?

Bel. I have been a witness, unknown to Cælia, to

such a conversation, as will clear up every doubt Sir John can possibly have entertained.

Ara. You charm me when you say so.——As I live, here comes my brother.—Stay; is not that wretch, Modely, with him? He is actually.—What can his assurance be plotting now?—Come this way, Mr. Belmour; we will watch them at a distance, that no harm may happen between them, and talk to the girl first. The monster!—— [*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR JOHN DORILANT *and* MODELY.

Mod. [*Entering, and looking after* Ara. *and* Bel.] They are together still!——
But let me resume my nobler self.

Sir J. Dor. Why will you follow me, Mr. Modely? I have purposely avoided you.—My heart swells with indignation.——I know not what may be the consequence.

Mod. Upon my honour, Sir John——

Sir J. Dor. Honour, Mr. Modely! 'tis a sacred word. You ought to shudder when you pronounce it. Honour has no existence but in the breast of truth. 'Tis the harmonious result of every virtue combined.—You have sense, you have knowledge; but I can assure you, Mr. Modely, though parts and knowledge, without the dictates of justice, or the feelings of humanity, may make a bold and mischievous member of society even courted by the world, they only, in my eye, make him more contemptible.

Mod. This I can bear, Sir John,——because I have deserved it.

Sir J. Dor. You may think, perhaps, it is only an idle affair with a lady, what half mankind are guilty of, and what the conceited wits of your acquaintance will treat with raillery. Faith with a woman! ridiculous!—But let me tell you, Mr. Modely, the man who even slightly deceives a believing and a trusting woman, can never be a man of honour.

Mod. I own the truth of your assertions. I feel the awful superiority of your real virtue. Nor should any thing have dragged me into your presence, so much I dreaded it, but the sincerest hope of making you happy.

Sir J. Dor. Making me happy, Mr. Modely!—You have put it out of your own power.—[*Walks from him, then turns to him again.*]——You mean, I suppose, by a resignation of Cælia to me.

Mod. Not of Cælia only, but her affections.

Sir J. Dor. Vain and impotent proposal!

Mod. Sir John, 'tis not a time for altercation.——By all my hopes of bliss here and hereafter, you are the real passion of her soul.——Look not so unbelieving: by Heaven 'tis true; and nothing but an artful insinuation of your never intending to marry her, and even concurring in our affair, could ever have made her listen one moment to me.

Sir J. Dor. Why do I hear you?——O, Mr. Modely, you touch my weakest part.

Mod. Cherish the tender feelings, and be happy.

Sir J. Dor. Is it possible that amiable creature can think and talk tenderly of me? I know her generosity; but generosity is not the point.

Mod. Believe me, sir, 'tis more; 'tis real unaffected passion. Her innocent soul speaks through her eyes the honest dictates of her heart. In our last conference, notwithstanding her mother's commands; notwithstanding what I blush to own, my utmost ardent solicitations to the contrary, she persisted in her integrity, tore the papers which left her choice free, and treated us with an indignation which added charms to virtue.

Sir J. Dor. O these flattering sounds!——Would I could believe them!

Mod. Belmour, as well as myself, and Lady Beverley was a witness of the truth of them. I thought it my duty to inform you, as I know your delicacy with regard to her. And indeed I would in some measure endeavour to repair the injuries I have offered to your family, before I leave it for ever.—— O, Sir John, let not an ill-judged nicety debar you from a happiness, which stands with open arms to receive you. Think what my folly has lost in Araminta; and, when your indignation at the affront is a little respited, be blest yourself, and pity me.—— [*As he goes out, he still looks after* Araminta *and* Belmour.]——I don't see them now; but I will go round that way to the house. [*Exit* Modely.

Sir J. Dor. What can this mean?——He cannot intend to deceive me; he seems too sincerely affected.

—I must, I will believe him. The mind which suspects injustice, is half guilty of it itself.——Talks tenderly of me! tore the papers! treated them with indignation! Heavens! what a flow of tender joy comes over me!——Shall Cælia then be mine? How my heart dances! O! I could be wondrous foolish!—Well, Jonathan.

Enter STEWARD.

Stew. The gentleman, sir——

Sir J. Dor. What of the gentleman? I am ready for any thing.

Stew. Will wait upon your honour to-morrow, as you are not at leisure.

Sir J. Dor. With all my heart.—Now or then, whenever he pleases.

Stew. I am glad to see your honour in spirits.

Sir J. Dor. Spirits, Jonathan! I am light as air. —Make a thousand excuses to him;——but let it be to-morrow, however, for I see Lady Beverley coming this way.

Stew. Heaven bless his good soul! I love to see him merry. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

L. Bev. If I don't interrupt you, Sir John——

Sir J. Dor. Interrupt me, madam, 'tis impossible.

L. Bev. For I would not be guilty of an indecorum, even to you.

Sir J. Dor. Come, come, Lady Beverley, these little bickerings must be laid aside. Give me your hand,

lady. Now we are friends. [*Kissing it.*]——How does your lovely daughter?

L. Bev. You are in a mighty good humour, Sir John; perhaps every body may not be so.

Sir J. Dor. Every body must be so, madam, where I come; I am joy itself.

"*The jolly god that leads the jocund hours.*"

L. Bev. What is come to the man!——Whatever it is, I shall damp it presently.—[*Aside.*]——Do you choose to hear what I have to say, Sir John?

Sir J. Dor. You can say nothing, madam, but that you consent, and Cælia is my own.——Yes, you yourself have been a witness to her integrity. Come, indulge me, Lady Beverley. Declare it all, and let me listen to my happiness.

L. Bev. I shall declare nothing, Sir John, on that subject: what I have to say is of a very different import.——In short, without circumlocution, or any unnecessary embarrassment to entangle the affair, I and my daughter are of opinion, that it is by no means proper for us to continue any longer in your family.

Sir J. Dor. Madam!

L. Bev. This is what I had to declare, Sir John.

Sir J. Dor. Does Cælia, madam, desire to leave me?

L. Bev. It was a proposal of her own.

Sir J. Dor. Confusion!

L. Bev. And a very sensible one too, in my opinion. For when people are not so easy together, as

might be expected, I know no better remedy than parting.

Sir J. Dor. [*Aside.*] Sure, this is no trick of Modely's, to get her away from me!—He talked too himself of leaving my family immediately.—I shall relapse again.

L. Bev. I find, Sir John, you are somewhat disconcerted; but, for my part—

Sir J. Dor. O torture!

L. Bev. I say, for my part, Sir John, it might have been altogether as well, perhaps, if we had never met.

Sir J. Dor. I am sorry, madam, my behaviour has offended you, but——

Enter ARAMINTA, CÆLIA, *and* BELMOUR.

Ara. [*To* Cælia, *as she enters.*] Leave the house indeed!—Come, come, you shall speak to him.—— What is all this disorder for? Pray, brother, has any thing new happened?——That wretch has been beforehand with us.— [*Aside to* Bel.

L. Bev. Nothing at all, Mrs. Araminta; I have only made a very reasonable proposal to him, which he is pleased to treat with his and your usual incivility.

Sir J. Dor. You wrong us, madam, with the imputation.——[*After a pause, and some irresolution, he goes up to* Cælia.]—I thought, Miss Beverley, I had already given up my authority, and that you were perfectly at liberty to follow your own inclinations.

I could have wished, indeed, to have still assisted you with my advice; and I flattered myself that my presence would have been no restraint upon your conduct. But I find it is otherwise. My very roof is grown irksome to you, and the innocent pleasure I received in observing your growing virtues, is no longer to be indulged to me.

Cælia. O, sir, put not so hard a construction upon what I thought a blameless proceeding. Can it be wondered at, that I should fly from him who has twice rejected me with disdain?

Sir J. Dor. With disdain, Cælia?

Cælia. Who has withdrawn from me even his parental tenderness, and driven me to the hard necessity of avoiding him, lest I should offend him farther. I know how much my inexperience wants a faithful guide; I know what cruel censures a malicious world will pass upon my conduct;—but I must bear them all. For he who might protect me from myself——protect me from the insults of licentious tongues, abandons me to fortune.

Sir J. Dor. O, Cælia!——have I, have I abandoned thee?——Heaven knows my inmost soul; how did it rejoice but a few moments ago, when Modely told me that your heart was mine!

Ara. Modely!—Did Modely tell you so?—Do you hear that, Mr. Belmour?

Sir J. Dor. He did, my sister, with every circumstance which could encrease his own guilt, and her integrity.

Ara. This was honest however.

Sir J. Dor. I thought it so, and respected him accordingly. O, he breathed comfort to a despairing wretch! but now a thousand, thousand doubts crowd in upon me. He leaves my house this instant; nay, may be gone already. Cælia too is flying from me,—perhaps to join him, and, with her happier lover, smile at my undoing!—— [*Leans on* Ara.

Cælia. I burst with indignation!——Can I be suspected of such treachery? Can you, sir, who know my every thought, harbour such a suspicion?—O, madam, this contempt have you brought upon me. A want of deceit was all the little negative praise I had to boast of, and that is now denied me.

[*Leans on* L. Bev.

L. Bev. Come away, child.

Cælia. No, madam. I have a harder task still to perform. [*Comes up to* Sir John.] To offer you my hand again under these circumstances, thus despicable as you have made me, may seem an insult. But I mean it not as such.—O, sir, if you ever loved my father, in pity to my orphan state, let me not leave you. Shield me from the world, shield me from the worst of misfortunes, your own unkind suspicions.

Ara. What fooling is here? Help me, Mr. Belmour.—There, take her hand.—And now let it go if you can.

Sir J. Dor. [*Grasping her hand.*] O, Cælia! may I believe Modely? Is your heart mine?

Cælia. It is, and ever shall be.

Sir J. Dor. Transporting ecstacy!—

[*Turning to* Cælia.

L. Bev. I should think, Sir John, a mother's consent——though Mrs. Araminta, I see, has been so very good to take that office upon herself.

Sir J. Dor. I beg your pardon, madam; my thoughts were too much engaged——But may I hope for your concurrence?

L. Bev. I don't know what to say to you; I think you have bewitched the girl amongst you.

Ara. Indeed, Lady Beverley, this is quite preposterous.——Ha!—He here again——Protect me, Mr. Belmour.

Enter MODELY.

Mod. Madam, you need fly no where for protection: you have no insolence to fear from me. I am humbled sufficiently, and the post-chaise is now at the door to banish me for ever.—My sole business here is, to unite that virtuous man with the most worthy of her sex.

Ara. [*Half aside.*] Thank you for the compliment ——Now, Mr. Belmour.

L. Bev. You may spare yourself the trouble, cousin Modely; the girl is irrecoverably gone already.

Mod. May all the happiness they deserve attend them! [*Going, then looks back at* Ara.] I cannot leave her.

Sir J. Dor. Mr. Modely, is there nobody here besides, whom you ought to take leave of?

Mod. I own my parting from that lady [*To* Ara.] should not be in silence; but a conviction of my guilt stops my tongue from utterance.

Ara. I cannot say I quite believe that; but as our affair may make some noise in the world, for the sake of my own character, I must beg of you to declare before this company, whether any part of my conduct has given even a shadow of excuse for the insult I have received. If it has, be honest, and proclaim it.

Mod. None, by heaven; the crime was all my own, and I suffer for it justly and severely——with shame I speak it, notwithstanding the appearances to the contrary, my heart was ever yours, and ever will be.

Ara. I am satisfied; and will honestly confess, the sole reason of my present appeal was this, that where I had destined my hand, my conduct might appear unblemished. [*Gives her hand to* Bel.

Mod. Confusion!——then my suspicious were just.

Sir J. Dor. Sister!

Cælia. Araminta!

Ara. What do you mean? what are ye surprised at?——The insinuating Mr. Modely can never want mistresses any where. Can he, Mr. Belmour? You know him perfectly.

Mod. Distraction!——Knows me? Yes, he does know me. The villain! though he triumphs in my sufferings, knows what I feel!——You, madam, are just in your severity; from you I have deserved every thing; the anguish, the despair which must attend my future life comes from you like Heaven's

avenging minister!——But for him——[Sir John *interposes.*]——O for a sword——But I shall find a time, and a severe one.——Let me go, Sir John——

Ara. I'll carry on the farce no longer.—Rash, inconsiderate madman! The sword which pierces Mr. Belmour's breast, would rob you of the best of friends. ——This pretended marriage, for it is no more, was merely contrived by him, to convince me of your sincerity.——Embrace him as your guardian angel, and learn from him to be virtuous.

Bel. O madam, let me still plead for him. Surely when a vain man feels himself in the wrong, you cannot desire him to suffer a greater punishment.

Ara. I have done with fooling.——You told me to-day, Lady Beverley, that he would never return to me.

L. Bev. And I told you, at the same time, madam, that if he did——you would take him.

Ara. In both you are mistaken.——Mr. Modely, your last behaviour to Cælia and my brother, shews a generosity of temper I did not think you capable of, and for that I thank you. But to be serious on our own affair, whatever appearance your present change may carry with it; your transactions of to-day have been such, that I can never hereafter have that respect for you, which a wife ought to have for her husband.

Sir J. Dor. I am sorry to say it, Mr. Modely, her determination is, I fear, too just. Trust to time

however; at least let us part friends, and not abruptly. We should conceal the failings of each other, and if it must come to that, endeavour to find out specious reasons for breaking off the match, without injuring either party.

Ara. To shew how willing I am to conceal every thing—now I have had my little female revenge, as my brother has promised us the fiddle this evening; Mr. Modely, as usual, shall be my partner in the dance.

Mod. I have deserved this ridicule, madam, and am humbled to what you please.

Ara. Why then, brother, as we all seem in a strange dilemma, why may'nt we have one dance in the garden? it will put us in good humour.

Sir J. Dor. As you please, madam.—Call the fiddles hither.—Don't despair, Mr. Modely.

[*Half aside to him.*

L. Bev. I will not dance positively.

Bel. Indeed but you shall, madam; do you think I will be the only disconsolate swain who wants a partner? Besides, you see there are so few of us, that we must call in the butler and the ladies' maids even to help out the figure.

Sir J. Dor. Come, Lady Beverley, you must lay aside all animosities. If I have behaved improperly to you to-day, I most sincerely ask your pardon, and hope the anxieties I have been under will sufficiently plead my excuse; my future conduct shall be irre-

proachable.—[*Turning to* Cælia.] Here have I placed my happiness, and here expect it. O, Cælia, if the seriousness of my behaviour should hereafter offend you, impute it to my infirmity; it can never proceed from want of affection.

A heart like mine its own distress contrives,
And feels most sensibly the pain it gives;
Then even its frailties candidly approve,
For, if it errs, it errs from too much love.

[A dance.—Exeunt omnes.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken before the Dance, by ARAMINTA and MODELY.

Araminta.

WELL, ladies, am I right, or am I not?
Should not this foolish passion be forgot;—
This fluttering something, scarce to be exprest,
Which pleads for coxcombs in each female breast?
How mortified he look'd!—and looks so still.——
[Turning to *Modely*.
He really may repent——perhaps he will.——

Modely.

Will, Araminta?——Ladies, be so good,
Man's made of frail materials, flesh and blood.
We all offend at some unhappy crisis,
Have whims, caprices, vanities,—and vices.
Your happier sex, by nature was design'd,
Her last, best work, to perfect humankind.
No spot nor blemish the fair frame deforms,
No av'rice taints, no naughty passion warms
Your firmer hearts. No love of change in you
E'er taught desire to stray.———

Araminta.

———All this is true.
Yet stay;—the men, perchance, may call it sneer,
And some few ladies think you not sincere.

For your petition, whether wrong or right,
Whate'er it be, withdraw it for to-night.
Another time, if I should want a spouse,
I may myself report it to the house:—
At present, let us strive to mend the age;
Let justice reign,—at least upon the stage.
Where the fair dames, who like to live by rule,
May learn two lessons from the LOVERS SCHOOL:
While Cœlia's choice instructs them how to choose,
And my refusal warns them to refuse.

THE END.

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